



# Power Outage

---

## Fact Sheet

### Are we at risk?

Hurricanes and winter storms can cause long-term power outages. When you experience a loss of power, you should notify Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) at the co-op's outage hotline: 1-877-74-SMECO. There are several things we can do to be prepared for this kind of emergency. The following guidelines will help ensure a more comfortable and safe wait for your electricity to be restored.



### How To Prepare

- **Have several flashlights** with extra batteries on hand. Candles and lanterns are not suggested.
- **Purchase a simple, battery-powered radio** in order to hear emergency updates.
- **Maintain a supply of cash** in your home. ATM machines may not be working during a power outage.
- **Plan for an electricity-free source of heat.** Remember not to burn charcoal and gas grills inside closed quarters- the release of carbon monoxide can be lethal.
- **Keep a corded phone in your home.** Cordless phones will not work without electricity.
- **Check the batteries** in your smoke alarms.
- It is possible to **purchase a small generator**, but pay close attention to all safety guidelines. These devices also emit CO gas. [Click here to learn how to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. \(en español\)](#)
- **Notify SMECO** of any life support equipment in your home that depends on electricity. Although you will not have priority during power restoration, as a critical account customer you will be updated on the status of any long term outages so you can plan for a backup power source or alternate place to stay.
- **Learn how to turn off and unplug all appliances**, including the heat pump. You will need to do this when the power goes out to avoid a surge once electricity is restored.
- **Keep a 3-day supply of water.** Oftentimes water is lost along with power. If you have advance warning, fill up bathtubs and other containers with water for hygiene purposes.

### Food Safety

**If power is restored within 2 hours, all food inside a refrigerator should be safe for consumption. After 2 hours, use the following guidelines provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):**

- Freezers: A half-full freezer will hold food safely for 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours.
- Refrigerator: Pack milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoilable leftovers into a cooler surrounded by ice.
- Throw away any food that has a temperature of 40°F or more. A digital quick-response thermometer should be used for this purpose.
- Use the food safety standard: *when in doubt, throw it out!*

---

#### For more information:

- St. Mary's County Health Department- 301-475-4330
- Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative- 1-888-440-3311
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention website: [www.bt.cdc.gov/poweroutage/](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/poweroutage/)